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By ALBERT PAYSON TERHUNE Author of "Caleb Conover, Railroader," "Dr. Dale," "On Glory's

1909, Copyright, 1909, by Albert Payson Terhune

"But I've just told you—"

"You've told me there was to be twelve guests. That's all right. There'll be only twelve. I'll be one of the twelve. Blacarda was invited. He's laid up in the hospital from a car acce'dent an' can't come. I'm helpin' you out by takin' his place. No inconvenience to anyone. Unless maybe you think your daughter an' your sister-in-law won't care to meet me?"

"Not at all! Nonsense!" fumed Standish, in fearful straits. "They'd be very glad indeed. But—"

"Then that's settled," decided Conover. "Thanks."

He bent over the check book, pen in hand. Standish, at his wit's end, made one more attempt to drag himself free of the dilemma.

"Same notes. Different tempo. One is the motive of the boy who starts out through the forest of life sounding a

or the dilemma.

"I know you won't be offended." he faltered, with another dry cough, "if I say frankly,—frankness is always best, I think.—that I—" of the dilemma.

best, I think,—that I—"

Caleb closed the check book with a smap and whirled his desk chair about, to face his visitor; so suddenly that the latter involuntarily started back. Not even Standish could now misread that dull, hot glint in Conover's pale

"Look here Mr. Standish," said the der of thinkin' a man can't under-stand you just because you can't un-derstand him. If you'd said to one of your own crowd: 'I can't invite you to my house because my fam'ly's goin' to be there; because you ain't fit to meet my women,'—if you'd said that to one of them, he'd a' been your ene-my for life. You wouldn't a' dared insult him so. But you said it to me because you thought I wouldn't underbecause you thought I wouldn't under-stand. Well, I do. Shut up! I know what you want to say, an' I don't what you want to say, an' I don't want to hear it. I'm not comin' to your house for love of you; but I'm comin' just the same—I guess I've bought my right to. If a man's good enough to beg from, he's good enough to treat civil. An' you're goin' to treat me civil. This afternoon I'm goin' to get an invite to your dinner an' the musicle. You ought to be grateful that I don't insist on singin' there. I'm I don't insist on singin' there. I'm goin' on Friday, an' you're goin' to pass the word around that I'm to be treated right, while I'm there. Just to make sure of it. I'll date this check ahead to next Saturday."

A last remnant of manhood flared up

ident's withered soul.

"I'm not to be buildozed. Mr. Conover!" he said with a certain dignity.

"Because you extend business favors to me. I am not obliged to admit a man of your character to my home. And I shall not. As for the loan..."

"As for the loan," replied Conover, shrugging his shoulders, and tossing the check book back in the drawer, "I'm not obliged to stave off ruin from a man that thinks I'm not fit to enter his home. That's all. Good day."

He slammed shut the desk drawer and began to look over some of the opened letters before him.

The old man had risen to his feet,

opened letters before him.

The old man had risen to his feet, his eyes fixed on the close drawer like those of a starved dog on a chunk of meat. His mouth corners twitched and humiliation forced an unwonted moisture into his eyes."

"Mr. Conover," he began, tentatively. "Good day!" retorted Caleb without raising his eyes from the papers he was sorting.

was sorting.

"Mr. Conover!" coughed Standish in despair, "Til—Til be very glad if you'll dine with us on Eriday night.'

Conover opened the drawer, tossed the check across the table and went

on with his work.
"I'll be there," he grunted.

CHAPTER IX A Lesson In Ignorance.

Desiree was at the plano. Conover, whose knowledge of embraced one Sousa march and embraced one Sousa march and "Summer Noon" (with a somewhat hazy idea as to which was which) lounged sprawling on a cushion by her feet; listening in ignorant admiration to the snatches of melody. That anyone could coax a tune out of so complex an instrument was to him a mystery to be be greeted with silent respect.

He had come to her, in the long Spring twilight, to show with naive pride an invitation he had just received. An invitation to the musicaledinner at the Standishes', three nights ceived. An invitation to the musicaledinner at the Standishes', three nights hence. He volunteered no information as to how it had been obtained; but evaded the girl's wondering queries with the guilty embarrassment that was always his when she chanced to corner him in a fault. From Conover's manner Desiree gathered that the invitation was in a way an effort on Standish's part to repay the courtesy of the various large loans she knew Caleb had made to the banker. Nor would she spoil the Fighter's very evident delight by closer cross-questioning. Caleb had sald, days ago, that he was going to be invited to the dinner. And, despite her invariable scoffs at his boasts she had long since learned that such younts had an odd way of coming true. The June dusk lay velvet-like over The June dusk lay velvet-like over the little music room. From the yard outside came the bitter-sweet breath of syringas. Far off sounded the yells of Billy Shevlin and some of his fel-

low street-boys; their racket mellow-ed by distance.

Talk had languished: At last Desiree had crossed to the piano. She sat. playing scraps of music, as was her wont; pausing now and then to speak; then letting her fingers run into a new air or a series of soft improvised chords. She had scant technique and played almost wholly by ear; using the piano only as the amateur music-worshipper's medium for recalling and reproducing some cherished fragments

But to Caleb, lolling at her side, the performance was sublime. That any-one could talk while playing the plano was to him nothing short of marvelous He was firmly convinced it was a gift vouchsafed to Desiree alone. Mus-Itself was wholly unintelligible to im. Except from Desiree's lips or fingers, he found it actively distaste fingers, he found it actively distasteful. But all she did was perfect. And if her playing fell upon his ear as a meaningless jumble of sounds, he at least found the sounds sweet.

"What's that thing you just did with one hand and then rumbled down on the low notes with the other?" he asked. after a spell of watching the busy white fingers shiping through the dusk. white fingers shining through the dusk.

"That?" queried Desiree. "It's just the Vanderdecken motive from The Flying Dutchman. And I used to be able to play the whole Spinning Song; but I've forgotten most of it."

"H'm!" murmured Caleb, who found

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through the forest of life sounding a joy-challenge to everything and every-body. The other is woven into the

body. The other is woven into the dead hero's mourning chant. In Goet-terdaemmerung, you know." "Oh, yes. I remember now." said Caleb, hastily. "It'd just slipped my mind for the minute. I've got so many things to think of, you know."

"Caleb Conover!"

Down came both little hands with a reproving bang on the keyboard, as the girl started out of her rhapsody. "Caleb Conover, you're being that way again! And after all I've told you. How am I going to cure you of

I going to do with you? Are you never

going to grow up?"

"Not so long as my making a fool of nyself can get such a sweet-sounding laugh cut of you." he returned.
"But, honest, Dey, how can you expect me to know them things about horn an' Dutchmen an' spinnin', an' all that when you payer tell me beall that, when you never tell me be-forehand what it is you're goin' to play? When you're doin' those plane stunts, I always feel like you was travelin' through places where the 'No Thoroughfare' sign's hung out for me. Then when I make b'lieve I'm keepin up with you.—just so as I won't get to feelin' too lonesome.—you find it out somehow an' call me down. What's that thing you're playin' now?" Infinite sweet, fraught with all the

Infinite sweet, fraught with all the tender hopelessness of parting, the notes sobbed out into the little room; then stopped abruptly.

"That's all I know of it," she said.

"I only heard it once. In New York, winter before last. It's the third act duet between Mimi and Rodolfo in 'Boheme.' Where they say goodbye in the snow, at the Paris barrier. I wish I remembered the rest of it."

"Why I thought those people was in the play you told me about. You see I do remember some things like that. Weren't they the ones that was in love an' the feller said the girl was his 'Youth,' an' when she died—"

"Yes. It's an opera with the same sort of story. It's queer you remember, it. That's the second time four've spoken to me about 'La Vie de Boheme.' How funny that a big, matter-of-fact business man like you should be interested in sentimental stories of

spoken to me about 12 vie de Bo-heme.' How funny that a big, matter-of-fact business man like you should be interested in sentimental stories of Youth and Love and Death! Come!" rising from the music stool and losing the unwonted dreaminess that had stolen over her, "I'm going to talk to you now about the Standishes' dinner.
Have you any idea how to behave, or what to do?"

was pardoned for his unknown offence and that she was once more happy.
Hence the weight was off his mind and

"Well," drawled Caleb, "I guess it" mor'n three years now since you loored me from the simple Jeffersonian joys of eatin' with my knife. An' I know 'bout not tuckin' my napkin under my chin, an' not makin' noises like a swimmin' pool while I'm eatin' soup. An'—an I musn't touch the butter with my fork You see I've learnt a let by my fork. You see I've learnt a lot by your lettin' me come here to dinner so often. I guess there ain't any more things to remember, are there? The things to remember, are there? The part about the butter will be hardest

but—"
"There won't be any butter," said Desiree, "So there's one less temptation for you to grapple with."
"Then I'll be alle ight about the eatin," replied Conover. Knife, soup napkin, butter. Anything else?"
"Only about fifty more things," answered Desiree, pessimistically. "Oh I do wish I were to be there to coach you!"

already. Napkins are servy—serv—"
"Serviettes?" suggested Desires. "But no one nowadays calls them-"An' when you don't want to get jagged, put your hand, with a care-less,debbynair movement," he quoted,

"'Over the top of whichever glass the serv'nt is offerin' to fill.' How's that?" he said. "Now, sir, my sovereign, he he ended with pride. "I'll sit up with tell me I go first; your people say I that measly book ev'ry night till Friday. By that time I'll be—" day. By that time I'll be—"
"You'll be so tangled up you won't know whether your soup-plate is for oysters or coffee," she interrupted. "Now listen to me: I'm going to crowd

into one inspired lecture all I can think of about dinner etiquette and other social chores, for you to use that evening. And when you go home, burn that book up."

She forthwith launched upon a disquisition of such difficulties as lay before him on his flebut as a diner, and how each might be bridged. After the first few sentences, Caleb's attention strayed from her words to her voice. Its sweetness, its youth and a peculiar

giant sat huddled up in an awkward, happy bunch at the feet of the youthful Gamaliel. A bar of lamplight from the opposite side of the street filtered through the swaying window curtains, bringing her half-hidden head with its dusky crown of hair into vague relief. From under the shadowy brows, her great eyes glowed in the dim light. Her dainty, flower face was very earnest. Caleb felt an almost irrestible desire to pass his great, rough hand "H'm!" murmured Caleb, who found her words as unmeaning as her music. "I thought I remembered that one. "Spinning Song." hey?"
"Yes." she said absently. "It starts cut with lots of bizzy, purry little notes too fast for me to play. I never could learn the plano."
"You bet you could!" cried Caleb, at once afire with contradiction. "Tve heard a lot of crackajack piano players an' never one of 'em could hold a candle to you Why, there was Blink Snesham—the feller they called Rag-Curious to learn how the lad had candle to you why, there was sink is interview with Jack hawarden. Snesham—the feller they called Ragtime King.—down to Kerrigan's. You've got him beat a block."

"You dear old loyal idlot!" laughed Desiree, lifting one hand from the keys to rumple his stiff red hair with a gesture as affectionate as it was discom—"Why, yes," said Desiree in surprise

"This noon."

"Ask you to marry him?"

"He told you?" ehe cried.

"Yes. Beforehand. Didn't he say I'd gave him leave? No? Well, I s'pose he wouldn't be likely to. But I did. Sent him on. to try his luck. With my blessin."

my blessin;"
"What do you mean? Did that foolish boy—?" "Came like a little man an' asked my permission, as your guardian, to make a proposal to you." "And you told him he could? What business was it of yours, I'd like to

"I told him it wasn't any business of mine. That's why I let him come. If it was my business, I'd have you shut up in a big place with walls all around it; an' kittens an' canary-birds an' all corts of fluffy things for you to play with. An' no man but me should ever come within a hundred miles of you. Then there'd be no danger of your runnin' off an' gettin' married to some geeser who'd teach you to think I was the sort of man that ought to be fed in the kitchen an' never 'lowed in fed in the kitchen an' never 'lowed in

the parlor. Oh, I know."

The girl was looking at him with big, inscrutable eyes, as he halted half-ashamed of his own words.

"I think," she said slowly, after a little pause, "I think you must have inherited a great great deal of ignor-ance, Caleb. For during the years while you were a baby, you were too young to acquire very much of it. And you couldn't have acquired all your present stock in the thirty short year since that time. Besides, I don't think even Nature can make a man quite foolish unless he helps her a little."
"It sounds fine," admitted Caleb "But what does it mean? What break have I made now? If it was foolish to want you all to myself always." want you all to myself, always—"
"It wasn't," she interrupted, "And
you ought to know it wasn't. It—"

once you were the cleverest man he knew. It made me very happy at the time. And I was nice to him all the rest of the afternoon. But I see now

pretending?"

"But, Dey!" he declared. "Honest I —I thought—I did."

"You know very well you were pretending. You don't know whether Goetterdaemmerung is a dog, a bird, on a ratent medicine. Now confess. Do you?"

"From the sound," floundered Caleb, in all seriousness, "I'd put my money on the dog. But then, maybe—"

Desirce leaned back and laughed long and delightedly.

"Oh, Caleb!" she gasped. "What am I going to do with you? Are you never the state of the afternoon. But I see now it only showed how few sensible men he knew. Let's talk about something else."

"But—hold on!" begged Caleb. "Honest, Dey, you ought to think twice before turnin' down a chap like young hawarden. His fam'ly—"

"I told you last week never to talk that way again," said Desiree, with a stiffed break in her voice, "Why do you try to make me unhappy?"

"Me?" gurgled Caleb in an utter bewilderment of distress. "Why, little girl. I'd cut my head off for you. Please don't get sore on me. I'm no sort of don't get sore on me. I'm no sort of a feller to talk to a girl like you. I'm always sayin' the wrong thing with-out even knowin' afterward just what it was that hurt you. An' then I wish I had a third foot, so's I could kick myself. It's queer that Nature built men so that they couldn't kick themselves or pat themselves on the back Please be friends again. I—I wish there was some tea here I could drink

Please be friends again. I—I wish there was some tea here I could drink, just to show you how sorry I am?"

The girl's mood had changed. She laughed with such heartiness at his penitential attitude that he all at once felt full forgiveness was granted. If there was a forced note in her galety, his duller senses did not perceive it.

"Absolve 'te!" she intoned. "I'm a little cat ever to scratch you; and I'm silly to let perfectly harmless things hurt you. I don't know why I do it. Some times I don't know my own self-any more than if I was a Frisian any more than if I was a Frisian market woman in a pink baize bonne and number ten sabots. It's just be-cause you're so good and sweet and gentle that I walk all over you. Begentie that I walk all over you. Because you let me do it I take out all my bad, horrld, nasty tempers on you. And then you look so surprised and unhappy when I say snippy, mean things to you; or when I tell you you make me feel badly and—oh where is my pominative case? Anyway you're my nominative case? Anyway, you're my deer, old spiendid chum. And I wouldn't be so cranky to you if I didn't care more for your little finger than for any other man's head. And if you'd only hit me or swear at me now and then, I'd be lots nicer. Why

don't you?"

Caleb, agape, yet grinning in feeble delight, tried to understand part of this rapid-fire speech of penance. Almost wholly failing to grasp her meaning, he nevertheless gathered that he

(To be Continued.)

Eagles' Annual Report Shows Benefits Paid Amounting to \$16,765

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as follows: Dishursements Sick benefits, Death benefits, Special relief, Total.

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Besides I'm going to the musicale afterward. But I'm so afraid you'll do something you ought not to. You won't, will you?"

"Most likely I will," confessed Caleb, rusfully. "But I bought a book to day bout etiquette an I'm reading up a little. I've got one or two pointers tives. He refused to go to court, caustleady. Narking are servy—serv—" ing it to be reported abroad that he was ill. He met the prince regent at the house of the Lady Salisbury of the time. "I am very sorry to offend your royal highness by not going to court,' he said. "Now, sir, my sovereign, he must go last. Now, this very bad for me when I go back to Persia." So saying, he made a significant pass toward his head, expressing decapitation. The prince tried to appease him. "But, sir, you still angry with me. You have not invited me to your party tomorrow night." The prince explained that it was only a children's party, but the ambassador might come if he chose. He did choose, for he went and, being the only ambassador there, led all the guests, thus scoring heavily for Persia, which made him comfortable about the

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